

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

VOL. 37.---No. 23.] LONDON, SATURDAY, DEC. 23, 1820. [Price, 6d.

TO  
EARL GREY.

## LETTER II.

*On the obstacles to a Change of the Ministry.—On the Speech of the American President.—On the Causes of the present Distress in this Kingdom.—On the means of removing that Distress.*

London, Dec. 19, 1820.

MY LORD,

It is a part of the privileges of the press to avail itself of the use of well-known names in order to give a sort of passport to its productions, and to obtain for them a chance of being received with attention. Availing myself of this privilege, I again address your Lordship upon matters of great importance to the country at this moment; and which matters, if they be not speedily attended to by persons in power, will command attention in a tone and manner not to be resisted. Every one now sees that a great change of some kind must take

place. I have long been endeavouring to shew that the change ought to be made. At first, not a man joined me in opinion; afterwards I was joined by a few; I now hear my opinions echoed from one end of the kingdom to the other; and I see writers and speakers putting forth as their own, and taking great credit to themselves for those very opinions, for having put forth which, they, for years stigmatized me as fool or rebel.

Some men pursue one path of gratification, and some another path. Some are delighted with titles and decorations; a greater number make their happiness consist in the accumulation of riches. The path of gratification which I have pursued is that of obtaining the reputation of possessing knowledge, and that species of knowledge especially, which is calculated to enable a man to contribute towards the prosperity, the freedom and the glory of his country. I have never written for temporary purposes. I have never been swayed by a desire to avoid

popular obloquy. The decision of *to-day*, I have always disregarded; and what I have always desired to have said of me was, "he *foresaw* these things "when nobody else foresaw "them; he understood these "things when nobody else understood them; the evils, "which have now fallen upon "his country, would never have "taken place if his advice had "been followed." I am too well aware of the workings of envy in some, and of false pride in others, to expect ever to see this acknowledgment in print, or to hear it from the lips; but, at the same time, I know that men must say it in their hearts; and even in their reluctance to give utterance to their thoughts, I find additional gratification; while I *know*, with as much certainty as I know that this is Tuesday, that the wisdom of my principles and proposed measures, of fourteen years ago, must be acknowledged, and that *in acts of Parliament too*, or, that this country must take its chance on the boisterous sea of revolution.

As I had the honour to observe to your Lordship in my first letter, the people can see no use of a change of the Mi-

nistry, unaccompanied with a change of the system. Indeed, it is necessary to believe this, in order to take from the opposition a presumption of complete worthlessness of character. For, it is notorious that there is every reason in the world for the removal of the present Ministers, upon the supposition that a mere change of *men* would not be absurd and even mischievous. The feeling with regard to her Majesty, is wholly without a parallel, whether considered as to its ardour or its extent. In 1814, when Napoleon had been subdued, when a twenty-two years war had been brought to what was regarded a most glorious termination; when, though for various reasons, all parties joined in rejoicing, when the government, the aristocracy, the Church; when these took the lead; when the army and even the fleet were called forth to join in the shouts; when nearly three hundred thousand pounds of the public money was expended in triumphal exhibitions and entertainments; even at that time the demonstrations of joy, and the expressions of congratulation were nothing in comparison to what they have been in

consequence of the triumph of her Majesty. At that time the cities and towns inhabited in part, at least, by the opulent, and acting under the urgings of the constituted authorities, displayed signs of joy; but now these signs have shewn themselves in the very *villages*, and that, too, where the principal person has frequently been no more than a common farmer. So far from waiting to be urged by persons in authority, the people have acted in almost every case contrary to the well known wishes of such persons; and, in numerous instances, in open defiance of them.

Now, my Lord, it is not to be believed that those who have thus rejoiced at her Majesty's triumph, must not hold in reprobation the conduct of the Ministers; and that they must not wish to see those Ministers disgraced by being at any rate deprived of their power. They do not, perhaps, think with a certain Member of Parliament, that the Ministers ought to be *hanged*, or, at any rate, that they ought to be *hanged* while it is improper or unnecessary to *impeach* them; but that the people, who still suspect that the Ministers meditate some-

thing against the Queen, to whose applications those Ministers turn a deaf ear; that the people do and must wish these Ministers to be dismissed, is a thing not to be denied.

What, then, can be the cause of their stubborn silence upon the subject of that dismissal? You have the cause very satisfactorily explained in the petition of Middlesex, and in that of the Common-Hall of London, and also in that of the City of Westminster. "*Give us a Change of the Ministry,*" say the people; but "give us no change that will not secure to us a reform." In the county of Durham, I perceive, nothing was said about a change in the Ministry; and nothing is proposed to be said, I perceive, in the county of Berks. Why is this; because if the proposition to dismiss the Ministers had been made, some one (the meeting being a public one) would have proposed, as was done at *Leeds*, to make Reform a *condition* for the change of Ministry, and would thereby have defeated the purpose of those who had brought forward the proposition for praying for the change, which actually took place in Middlesex, to the utter



confusion of those by whom the meeting had been called.

It is manifest, therefore, my Lord, that the only obstacle to the supplanting of the Ministers by their rivals for power, is, that those rivals will make no pledge to procure for the people a Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament. In my last letter to your Lordship, I thought it unnecessary to go at any length into matter to shew the necessity of this Reform. Neither shall I do this upon this occasion; but I will endeavour to describe, as fully as my space will allow, the present dangers of the country; and if I should succeed in doing justice to that part of my subject, I shall, I think, have little difficulty in convincing you, that these dangers are to be obviated; or, in other and more pointed terms, that a dreadful convulsion is to be prevented solely by that Reform, which would conciliate the people, hush all animosities; make England once more like England, make us all join heart and hand with the King, his Ministers and the Parliament, to rescue our country from peril and degradation, and to make

it once more worthy of its name.

What is the principal cause of that ruin and misery which now pervades the land, and which makes the life of the industrious man hardly worth preserving? What is the principal cause of the discontents which have furnished us with the best possible means of urging on the cause of Reform? This cause is the existence of a paper system, by the means of which the incomes of the land-owners, and earnings of the industrious, are taken from them in proportions so large as to leave to the farmer, the trader, the journeyman, and the labourer, so perfect an inadequacy of means, as to deprive the two former classes of the possibility of making suitable provision for their children; and as to produce, with regard to the two latter classes, that monster in civil society, *starvation in the midst of abundance*.

My lord, is it to be arrogant or presumptuous, to differ in opinion with, or to call in question the wisdom of, those who one year ascribed the distresses of the country to a *superabundance of food*, and the very next year ascribed it to a *superabundance of mouths*? Is it to



be presumptuous, my lord, to assert that there must be something *radically wrong* in a system under which good harvests as well as bad harvests are an *affliction* to a nation? Is it to be presumptuous to discard as unworthy of attention the opinions of men, who declared the distress to have arisen from a *sudden transition from war to peace*, and who, at the end of six years of peace, have seen nothing but a constant increase of distress, and have then avowed that they have no remedy to administer, and no remedy even to suggest? Is it to be presumptuous to venture to set forward one's opinions in opposition to those of men, who tax one part of the people to furnish another part with the means of *emigrating*, at the very same time that they pass laws to *prevent the importation of food*, and, of course, the *exportation of manufactures* in exchange?

I think it is not to be presumptuous to do this. I have all along disapproved of the measures which have been adopted with respect to this great matter. In my last letter I took the liberty to call your lordship's attention to what was

passing in the United States of America relative to the subject in question; and I shall, by and bye, have to notice the recent speech of the President, and again to avail myself of it in the way of illustration.

But, in justice to myself as well as in justice to the subject, I must first trace the *cause* from its root to the extremity of the branches. It was in the year 1797 that the first step was taken towards our present state of ruin and misery. It was then that that memorable Order of Council was issued, out of which have grown twelve acts of Parliament, the last of which goes by the name of Mr. Peel's Bill; to which acts we have to ascribe a long train of suffering and a hideous mass of present danger.

The first of these acts suspended cash payments at the Bank; the last of them has enacted, that cash payments shall be resumed; and has provided for the adoption of certain measures preliminary to that resumption. Here is the great cause of the distress; and now, in justice to myself, I will simply set down a very short account of my endeavours to prevent the

existence of this cause of calamity and of danger.

At a very early period after my return to England in 1800, I clearly perceived the dangers of this paper system; and I perceived not less clearly that payments in cash could never be resumed, without a destruction of a great part of the debt, or, without producing, first, general ruin and misery; and last, a convulsive revolution. During the years from 1803 to 1810, it was very seldom that a month passed over my head without an endeavour to inculcate these opinions, for the inculcation of which opinions I was repaid, in speech, in print, and in conversation, by every species of abuse, and in certain other ways, by the severest of persecution and punishment short of absolute killing. If ever man was *martyr* to any thing, I was a martyr to these opinions, which are now put forth as their own by thousands upon thousands of men, who then persecuted me, or who heartily applauded the persecutors.

I now come to the memorable epoch of 1810, when the discussion upon this grand subject, upon the decision as to which I well knew the fate of England

was to turn, assumed a more regular and official form. The party to which your lordship belonged, took the matter up, on the motion of the late *Mr. Horner*, and obtained a committee of enquiry, which committee was called the Bullion Committee, and which Committee reported, that an act ought to be passed *to compel the Bank to resume cash payments at the end of two years from that time.* The Ministerial party contended that the Bank was able at any time to resume cash payments; but that it would be inexpedient that it should do this until peace.

Thus stood, in 1810, the opinions, declarations, and propositions of the two parties in Parliament. Each party had its partizans out of doors. More than two hundred pamphlets were published on the subject; I stood alone, and, in my work written at that time, entitled *Paper against Gold*, I asserted, and I think I proved to demonstration, this position: "that  
" cash payments never could be  
" resumed, without a large re-  
" duction of the interest of the  
" debt, or, without the utter  
" ruin of all persons actively  
" engaged in trade of every de-  
" scription, and in agriculture."

In repayment for this new and extraordinary effort of mine, I had to receive a fresh and extraordinary quantity of the foulest abuse that ever was poured forth upon mortal man; but, as I have most satisfactorily experienced, abuse, misrepresentation, calumny, have no effect in enfeebling the body, or in relaxing the efforts of the mind, especially when the latter is supported by a consciousness of its rectitude. I knew I was right: I knew that *time* was constantly working for me and against my calumniators: in that knowledge I was gay, while I knew that their bosoms were filled with apprehension, or, at least, were the habitations of uncertainty.

Peace came; that long-looked-for peace; that peace which was to remove every obstacle to the resumption of cash payments, and upon the arrival of which, even the law positively said, cash payments were to be resumed! Now was the time when that which one party had proposed to adopt, and which the other party had said would at once take place in peace without any danger; now was that long-looked-for time arrived, and it came too with the unexpected

good luck of the restoration of the Bourbons, and of the chaining of the "*arch enemy of our finances*" to a rock! Now, then, arrived the time for the cash payments to be resumed, or for me to exult in my triumph, and to repay my calumniators with scorn! Were cash payments resumed, my lord? Oh! no! my prophecy was fulfilled. An act was passed to continue the suspension for *a year*. When that year expired another act was passed to continue it for another year. When that year was expired, another act was passed to continue cash payments for two years longer! I could hold no longer! Triumph would burst forth, whether I would or not, and out it came in the following words, which I insert here, however, not so much in justice to myself, as in the way of present warning to my country, every man in which country I beseech to pay attention to these words, for I am sure every one of them has full as much interest in the thing as I have myself.

"The Parliament, and, indeed, the country, were, as to this question, divided into two parties: one said, that the Bank would be able to pay in specie in two years:



“ the other said, that the Bank  
 “ was *always* able to pay, but  
 “ that it would not be *prudent*  
 “ to suffer the Bank to pay, till  
 “ *peace* came. I gave it as my  
 “ opinion, that peace would not  
 “ enable the Bank to pay; or,  
 “ at any rate, that her ladyship  
 “ would not pay in gold and sil-  
 “ ver when peace should come.  
 “ Thus far, then, time has  
 “ proved me to have been right.

“ We must now wait for TIME  
 “ again; but, happily, we shall  
 “ not have to wait *long*. Peace  
 “ is now again come; and come  
 “ in a way, too, that seems to  
 “ defy even chance to interrupt  
 “ it's duration. Not only is Na-  
 “ poleon down, but he is in our  
 “ hands; he is banished to a  
 “ rock, of which we have the  
 “ sole command and possession;  
 “ he is as completely in the  
 “ power of our Government as  
 “ if they had him in the Tower  
 “ of London. Therefore, this  
 “ great obstacle to gold and sil-  
 “ ver payments is swept away.  
 “ The Capets, or the *Bourbons*,  
 “ as they call themselves, are  
 “ restored. Spain has regained  
 “ that beloved Ferdinand, in  
 “ whose cause we were so zeal-  
 “ ous, and he has restored the  
 “ Inquisition and the Jesuits.  
 “ The Pope, to the great joy of  
 “ loyal protestants, is again in  
 “ the chair of Saint Peter; has  
 “ again resumed his keys and  
 “ his shepherd's crook. In short,  
 “ our government, so far from  
 “ dreading any enemy, is in  
 “ *strict alliance* with every  
 “ sovereign in Europe.

“ Now, then, are come the  
 “ halcyon days. Now John Bull  
 “ is to sit down in peace under

“ his own vine and his own fig-  
 “ tree with no one to make him  
 “ afraid. Now there will be,  
 “ there *can* be, no need of ar-  
 “ mies or nayies. Now, then,  
 “ my good neighbours, we shall,  
 “ surely, see gold and silver re-  
 “ turn. Which of you will *bet*  
 “ any thing on the affirmative of  
 “ this proposition? My opinion  
 “ is, that we shall not see it re-  
 “ turn; that we shall not see  
 “ the Bank pay in gold and sil-  
 “ ver; that we shall not hear  
 “ the Minister say, that the Old  
 “ Lady is ready with her cash.  
 “ In short, my opinion is, that  
 “ another and another Act of  
 “ Parliament will convince even  
 “ the most stupid and credulous,  
 “ that, as long as the dividends  
 “ on the National Debt are paid,  
 “ so long will they be paid in  
 “ Bank Notes, so long will the  
 “ law protecting the Bank  
 “ against demands in real money  
 “ remain in full force: for, the  
 “ man that needs more than two  
 “ more Acts of Parliament to  
 “ produce this conviction in his  
 “ mind, must be *an idiot*.

“ Let us wait, then, with pa-  
 “ tience for two years more;  
 “ but, let us keep our eye stea-  
 “ dily fixed on the movements  
 “ of the Ministry and the Bank.  
 “ Let us listen quietly to all  
 “ they say, without seeming to  
 “ take any notice of what they are  
 “ about. If they *do* pay in cash  
 “ at the end of two years, and  
 “ still continue to pay the divi-  
 “ dends, or the interest of the  
 “ debt, I will frankly acknow-  
 “ ledge, that I ought to pass  
 “ for an ignorant pretender all  
 “ the remainder of my life. If  
 “ they *do not* pay in cash at the

" end of two years more, then,  
 " what *they* ought to pass for I  
 " shall leave my readers to de-  
 " cide.

" As to giving them a longer  
 " tether, that is wholly out of  
 " the question. Twelve years,  
 " is the average length, it is said,  
 " of the life of man. I have al-  
 " ready given them *four*. I will  
 " allow them two more; but,  
 " as the grey hairs begin to  
 " thicken very fast upon my  
 " head, as my sons and daugh-  
 " ters begin to walk faster than  
 " their father and mother, I cer-  
 " tainly shall not lengthen the  
 " tether; but, at the end of two  
 " years from this first day of the  
 " month of September, 1815, I  
 " shall, if I still hold a pen, and  
 " the Old Lady does not pay  
 " the dividends in cash, assume  
 " it as a notoriously admitted  
 " fact, *that she never will and*  
 " *never can.*"

I must confess that I did *revel*  
 a little upon this occasion; but,  
 if I had revelled ten times as  
 much as I did, I should have been  
 fully justified in so doing. I  
 laughed at the confusion of my  
 enemies, of my stupid and base  
 traducers; but I had a right to  
 laugh. It was, after all, but a  
 moderate satisfaction for the sar-  
 casms of the Edinburgh Re-  
 viewers and for the revilings of  
 the London press.

Well, my Lord! The two  
 years expired, and this new pro-  
 phecy was fulfilled. No cash  
 payments came, but another

Act was passed to continue the  
 suspension for another year;  
 however, this Act provided that  
 the Bank *might* resume! Yes,  
 this Act graciously *permitted*  
 the Bank to resume, upon giv-  
 ing due notice of its intention,  
 to the Speaker of the House of  
 Commons. This Act was to ex-  
 pire in July, 1819; but, alas!  
 before that time arrived, another  
 Act was passed continuing the  
 suspension until the first of May,  
 1823!

Oh, delusion! Was there ever  
 delusion like this since the world  
 begun? Twenty-six years of  
 putting off, and twelve Acts of  
 Parliament appointing the time  
 of resumption! Call the Re-  
 formers a set of *deluded* people,  
 indeed! Have their leaders  
 ever been deluded themselves,  
 or have they ever attempted to  
 delude others to an extent like  
 this!

So much for the *past*, my Lord;  
 and now we come to the *present*  
 and the *future*. The last of  
 the twelve Acts was what is call-  
 ed Mr. Peel's Bill; and this Bill,  
 in only four pages, decides the  
 fate of England, if it be perse-  
 vered in; and it does as much  
 for the public character of its  
 rulers whether it be persevered  
 in or not. This Bill is not like



the former Acts, merely to suspend the payment of cash at the Bank; but it provides for payments in bullion, between the time of passing it, and the first of May, 1823. The substance of the provisions are as follow. From 1st February to 1st October, 1820, the Bank is to pay its notes, in sixty ounce pieces of gold, at eighty-one shillings an ounce. From 1st October, 1820, to 1st of May, 1821, it is to pay in sixty ounce pieces at seventy-nine shillings and sixpence an ounce. From 1st May, 1821, to 1st May, 1823, it is to pay in sixty ounce pieces, at seventy-seven shillings and ten-pence halfpenny an ounce. From the 1st May, 1823, it is to pay in specie as it did in former times!

The moment I saw a newspaper account of this Bill, I said, and I put the saying into print, that if this Bill were carried into complete effect, without a reduction of the interest of the debt, *I would suffer myself to be broiled alive.* I now deliberately repeat the saying. To carry this Bill into effect, is even physically impossible; and yet if a stop be put to its progress, where will then be those two Houses of Parliament who passed it by an *unanimous vote*?

Here is the cause, my Lord. Here is the great cause of the distresses of the country. Here is the cause of the falling off in the means of the land-owner; of the ruin of the farmer and the trader; of the swelling of the poor-rates and the filling of the poor-houses; and of the starvation in the midst of plenty of the journeyman and the labourer. It

is to be observed, however, that the distress begun before the passing of this Bill. It begun the moment that peace was seen to be certain; and it did so begin because the paper money makers knew that they would be called upon, or that they would be liable to be called upon for cash, when the peace arrived. The renewal of the Suspension Act, from time to time, did not give them sufficient confidence to enable them to keep their paper out in the former quantity, and, therefore, the distress begun long before the passing of Mr. Peel's Bill. But this Bill has insured a *regular increase of the distress*, until the month of May, 1823; and when that time arrives, if the Bill be not before repealed, it has insured the blowing up of the system, if not a convulsive revolution. It is not necessary for me to explain to your Lordship the manner in which this Bill operates. Not that I should be afraid of offending you by going in to such matter; because your Lordship would well know that I meant the explanation for others and not for you. It will be sufficient just to state some of the effects of this Bill. Before this Bill arrive at the termination of its provisions, it will cause wheat to sell for four shillings a bushel or less. It will ruin every man who has borrowed money even to the fourth part of the amount of his property. It will ruin every man who trades, to any considerable extent, on borrowed capital. It will ruin every man who has taken a lease of a farm for three



years to come. It will ruin a great many thousands of persons who have annuities, rent charges, ground rents, marriage settlements, and other things to pay. It will disable the government from raising taxes sufficient for more than half the demands upon it. It will totally ruin commerce and manufactures. It will convey three-fourths of the estates of the nobility into the hands of fundholders and stock-jobbers.

Now, my lord, I was very confident in my predictions in 1810 and in 1815. I am not less confident now. But, *I never shall see this Bill carried into full effect.* Oh! no! This is one of the things that a parliament, which has been called omnipotent, cannot do. This is one of the things that it cannot do, though it passed the bill by an unanimous vote. It can do many things that I shall not take the liberty to mention. It can pass a law to prevent the people hearing even my prophecies; but it cannot prevent the prophecies from being fulfilled.

Gagging Bills, and Dungeon Bills, and Banishment Bills, and even Censorship Bills, it can cause to be carried into effect; but to cause to be carried into effect Mr. Peel's Bill, is beyond the stretch of its power. Before I come to speak of the difficulties which this Bill presents to a change of the Ministry, give me leave, my lord, to draw your attention for a few minutes to the American President's speech, which has just been received and pub-

lished in this country. In my last letter to your lordship, I took occasion to assure you, that, what was called *distress* in that country was by no means removed, nor, upon the point of removal; and that I imagined that loans in time of peace would, in that country, as well as in this, be resorted to.

In another part of this number, your lordship will find the whole of the President's speech, or message. You will find that the American debt amounts to about a *hundred millions of dollars*, which requires about *six millions of dollars* to pay the interest of it. You will find, that last year, they made a loan of *three millions of dollars*; and that the whole of the income (including the three millions borrowed) was *sixteen millions seven hundred thousand dollars*, while the expenditure was *sixteen millions eight hundred thousand dollars*. Here is a deficiency of more than *three millions of dollars* upon an expenditure of *sixteen millions*. How different is this state of things from that of 1817! In that year, there was a large surplus, and the President then announced his intention to recommend to the Congress to shew its generosity towards the old men who had served in the war of the revolution.

Having thus stated the simple facts, let me now beseech your lordship's attention for a moment to the manner in which the President endeavours to plaister them over; and I think

you will find, that, when republican rulers do take the trowel in hand, they can plaiser as well as the rest of us. The passage which I am about to quote, is rather long; but, if the instruction it gives do not compensate for its length, a man must have very little laughter in him that does not find his trouble of reading repaid by the diversion he will receive.

"In communicating to you a just view of public affairs, at the commencement of your present labours, *I do it with great satisfaction; because, taking all circumstances into consideration which claim attention, I see much cause to rejoice in the felicity of our situation.* In making this remark, I do not wish to be understood to imply, that an unvaried prosperity is to be seen in every interest of this great community. In the progress of a nation inhabiting a territory of such vast extent, and great variety of climate, every portion of which is engaged in foreign commerce, and liable to be affected, in some degree, by the changes which occur in the condition and regulations of foreign countries, it would be strange, if the produce of our soil, and the industry and enterprise of our fellow citizens, received, at all times, and in every quarter, an uniform and equal encouragement. This would be more than we have a right to expect, under circumstances the most favourable. *Pres-*  
*sures on certain interests, it is*

*admitted, have been felt; but, allowing to these their greatest extent, they detract but little from the force of the remark already made. In forming a just estimate of our present situation, it is proper to look at the whole; in the outline, as well as in the detail, a free, virtuous, and enlightened people know well the great principles and causes on which their happiness depends; and even those who suffer most, occasionally, in their transitory concerns, find great relief under their sufferings from the blessings which they otherwise enjoy, and in the consoling and animating hope which they administer. From whence do these pressures come? Not from a Government which is founded by, administered for, and supported by the people. We trace them to the peculiar character of the epoch in which we live, and to the extraordinary occurrences which have signalized it. The convulsions with which several of the Powers of Europe have been shaken, and the long and destructive war in which all were engaged, with their sudden transition to a state of peace, presenting, in the first instance, unusual encouragement to our commerce, and withdrawing it in the second, even within its wonted limit, could not fail to be sensibly felt here. The station, too, which we had to support through this long conflict, compelled, as we were finally, to become a party to*

" it with a principal Power,  
 " and to make great exertions,  
 " suffer heavy losses, and to  
 " contract considerable debts,  
 " distributing the ordinary  
 " course of affairs, by augment-  
 " ing, to a vast amount, the cir-  
 " culating medium, and thereby  
 " elevating, at one time, the  
 " price of every article above a  
 " just standard, and depressing  
 " it at another below it, had  
 " likewise its due effect.

" It is manifest, that the *pres-*  
 " *sures* of which we complain  
 " have proceeded, in a great  
 " measure, from these causes.  
 " When, then, we take into  
 " view the prosperous and  
 " happy condition of our coun-  
 " try, in all the great circum-  
 " stances which constitute the  
 " felicity of a nation—every in-  
 " dividual in the full enjoyment  
 " of all his rights—the union  
 " blessed with plenty, and ra-  
 " pidly rising to greatness,  
 " under a national government,  
 " which operates with com-  
 " plete effect in every part,  
 " without being felt in any, ex-  
 " cept by the ample protection  
 " which it affords, and under  
 " state governments which per-  
 " form their equal share, ac-  
 " cording to a wise distribution  
 " of power between them, in  
 " promoting the public happi-  
 " ness—it is impossible to be-  
 " hold so gratifying, so glorious  
 " a spectacle, without being  
 " penetrated with the most pro-  
 " found and grateful acknow-  
 " ledgements to the *Supreme*  
 " *Author of all good* for such  
 " manifold and inestimable bles-  
 " sings. Deeply impressed with  
 " these sentiments, I cannot re-

" gard the *pressures* to which I  
 " have adverted otherwise than  
 " in the light of *mild and in-*  
 " *structive admonitions*; warn-  
 " ing us of dangers to be shun-  
 " ned in future; teaching us  
 " lessons of economy, corres-  
 " ponding with the simplicity  
 " and purity of our Institutions,  
 " and best adapted to their sup-  
 " port; evincing the connec-  
 " tion and dependence which  
 " the various parts of our happy  
 " union have on each other,  
 " thereby augmenting daily our  
 " social incorporation, and ad-  
 " ding, by its strong ties, new  
 " strength and vigour to the po-  
 " litical; opening a wider range  
 " and with new encouragement  
 " to the industry and enterprise  
 " of our fellow-citizens at home  
 " and abroad; and more es-  
 " pecially by the multiplied  
 " proofs which it has accumulat-  
 " ed, of the great perfection of  
 " our most excellent system of  
 " government, the powerful in-  
 " strument, in the hands of an  
 " all-merciful Creator, in secur-  
 " ing to us these blessings."

You see, my lord, that though  
 the President is aware that he is  
 about to announce the existence  
 of distress, he begins by saying  
 that he has *much cause to re-*  
*joice in the felicity of the nation,*  
 which is so much like something  
 that I have frequently read in  
 our king's speeches, that I really  
 thought at first that I was get-  
 ting amongst the documents of  
 St. Stephen's. However, he  
 gets on; and out it comes that  
*pressures have been felt.* I did  
 not know before that *pressure*  
 had a *plural.* Let that pass,  
 however, and now we come,



after some high compliments to the people, to the ticklish point, namely, "from whence do these pressures come?" Aye! Aye! I say; whence do they come?—And now hear him, my lord; you will certainly think it is Lord Liverpool that is speaking.—"Not from the government," oh! no, no, no! Not from the government, to be sure!—"Not from the government, which is founded by, administered for, and supported by the people." Come, come, Mr. President! This is being "a little tricky," as they call it in your country. This is shocking logic. It amounts to the full of our doctrine, that the *King can do no wrong*, and it goes a great deal further, too, for it does not leave the people even a nominal responsibility in any set of persons whatever. But, let us hear now, whence the "pressures" have come: "we trace them to the peculiar character of the epoch in which we live, and to the extraordinary occurrences which have signalised it. The convulsions with which several of the powers of Europe have been shaken, and the long and destructive war, in which all were engaged, with their sudden transition to a state of peace." Who would not imagine that it was Lord Castlereagh himself that was speaking? Here is all the old empty stuff, that has long been worn out here, gathered carefully up to deck out a presidential speech on the other side of the Atlantic. By and bye, however, Mr. Monroe comes to something like common sense, and

speaks of the vast increase of the circulating medium that took place at one time, and of its great subsequent diminution. This is sense; and why could it not have been uttered clearly and simply, and not be attempted to be buried in a heap of nonsense.

The last part of the above quoted passage is one of the most complete instances that ever came under my view of the art of bewildering. The solemn acknowledgments to God do very little credit to the President's taste; while the whole piece presents a confusion of ideas, a defiance of logic and of grammar, such as I find it impossible to pass over unnoticed, though I have very great respect for the character of Mr. Monroe.

The truth is, that he is a very honest man; much too honest ever to have approved of a funding system; but that he is fairly entangled in it; and that, meaning to be President a second time, he dares not speak of it in the terms which it merits, for, if he were to do this, that caucus, on whom his re-election depends, would take care that he should never fill the President's chair again.

It is from the government, then, that the "pressures" have come; and it was the government that, by establishing the National Bank in 1816, entailed the curse of paper money upon America. At the conclusion of the war, the whole might have been swept away. That was not only my advice, but the advice of many most enlightened

men in that country. Instead of getting rid of the plague at once, it was rendered permanent by the establishment of that Bank; and in spite of the President's flowery picture, my opinion is, that that very paper money will finally produce a dissolution of the union. The *American farmers* will not, I am convinced, suffer themselves to be robbed in order to fill the pockets of stock jobbers. The interest of the debt has hitherto been paid out of the proceeds of the Custom House. The taxes so raised fall indirectly in part upon the farmers; but if they attempt to go to the Homesteads of the farmers to get the money to pay the interest of that debt, away goes in one instant all security for the existence of the general government. Indeed, the thing will never be attempted. It is unjust in itself, and it will have to meet with an opposition, of which no one not well acquainted with American farmers can have the smallest idea.

But, my Lord, the interesting point for us is the proof that we here have of the fatal effects of *paying in gold what was borrowed in paper*, even in a country like America. They do there actually pay in specie now. There are no internal taxes worth notice. All the taxes of a considerable farm, including poor-rates, road-rates, and school-rates, amount, in a whole year, to not more than seven or eight days wages of a common labourer; and yet, in a country thus situated, with a superabundance of land; with a degree of

ease and comfort amongst the common people unknown in any other country; with an orderly, peaceable, sensible population: with all these advantages, and with only a debt of about twenty-eight millions sterling, the change from paper to gold has produced what the President calls "pressures." Yet, this unjust, this unnatural, this really wicked compulsion to pay in gold what was borrowed in paper, has produced pressures even in America; and, if the loaning system be persevered in, instead of resorting to a reduction of the debt, and especially if an attempt be made to make the American farmers pay the interest of that debt, my opinion is, that this accursed system will produce a dissolution of the union.

However, there is another view to take of this matter, and a view which, to us, is of very great importance. Your Lordship has doubtless attended to the curious notion of the promoters of Mr. Peel's Bill, *that commerce would revive*, and that the revival of commerce would be one of the means of enabling the Bank to pay in specie without injury to the country. A notion may be so completely absurd, as to set all commentary at defiance. And this is precisely one of that sort. But, though we cannot comment upon the thing, we sometimes find the means of shewing the contrary of its assertion by facts which transpire. Now, my Lord, please to observe, that, a few years ago the revenue of the American Custom-



house amounted to nearly a third more than it does now; and I believe that more than five-sixths of it arose out of imports from England, Ireland and Scotland. The cause of the diminution has been the diminution of the imports; and that has arisen principally from the rising of the value of money in England; or, in other words, from the increasing inability in English merchants to give credit to merchants in America; which inability in English merchants has principally arisen from the drawing in of the paper of the Bank of England, which paper was drawn in preparatory to the return to cash payments! And, therefore, this Bill of Mr. Peel, which was to be rendered harmless partly by the revival of commerce, contained within itself the efficient means of preventing that revival!

So happy are we, my Lord, in heads to guide us in the conducting of our affairs; and so true it is, that it is sheer power, and not wisdom, by which, in general, mankind are governed! Loan-jobbers and stock-jobbers, and brokers in silver and in gold are very clever in managing their affairs, and in the making of money; but of all the scourges that God, in his wrath, ever permitted to be laid upon the back of a nation; the severest, the most odious and most degrading, is, the suffering of its affairs to be placed, even in the smallest degree, in the hands of persons of this description. Princes and Nobles may be blunder-headed; may com-

mit hundreds of follies; but the effects of these are open, visible, they strike all eyes, they give offence, the errors are corrected, and the nation is to rights again; but the minings, the sappings, the under-minings of the muck-worm are carried on unseen and unapprehended, till all is hollow, all is false, all is treacherous to the feet: the hour of destruction suddenly comes, and learning, wisdom, patriotism, loyalty and valour are all unavailing.

If I have succeeded in convincing your Lordship that the attempts to return to cash payments have been the cause of the ruin and misery; and that those attempts, if they be persevered in, must increase that ruin and misery, you will agree with me, of course, in opinion, that one of two things must be adopted: the *repeal of Mr. Peel's Bill*; or, *a reduction of the interest of the debt*.

Now, then, which of these shall be adopted? Shall it be the former? What tongue or pen can describe the shame, the disgrace, attendant on such repeal! Talk of mortification, indeed, in restoring her Majesty's name to the Liturgy; talk of mortification at placing that illustrious and gallant lady in a palace! Talk of humiliation in bending to the Radicals! What is any one, or what are all of these compared with the repeal of this Bill? This Bill was preceded by voluminous reports of Committees of the two Houses; to those reports were subjoined a detail of the evidence of all the most ex-



perienced merchants, money-dealers, bankers and political economists, several of whom were also Members of the Parliament. The Bill underwent the fullest discussion in both Houses, where it received improvements and additions; and where it finally passed by an unanimous vote of the whole legislature; and was sent forth as a thing to set the question at rest, to tranquillise the minds of the people, and to give to foreign nations an assurance of England's return to cash payments. It was to put an end to all fluctuations in prices, to all uncertainty in pecuniary transactions, to all danger in the making of contracts for the future. When the Regent came to prorogue the Parliament, the Speaker addressed him upon the subject of this great work of the session, of which work he spoke in terms of lofty eulogium, and tendered the Bill to the Prince as a signal proof of the wisdom, the foresight, and the providential care of his Parliament!

Why, my Lord, to repeal this Bill would be an act to make every Member of the Parliament ashamed to show his face. It is impossible to conceive how the Members could sit and look at one another during the progress of such repeal; and especially when they reflected that they had recently passed a law for the *banishing* of any one doing any thing tending to bring either House of Parliament into contempt. But, shame and disgrace would be very far indeed from being the most serious part of the

consequences that would attend the repeal of this Bill. The repeal would cause money to fall in value and prices to rise. The injury which would hence arise to those who had recently lent money or let lands, or contracted to receive annuities, is manifest enough. It would lower the value also of every debt due to tradesmen, manufacturers and merchants. It would rob, for one year, all yearly servants of a considerable portion of their wages. Your Lordship will bear in mind that the merchants of this country are great creditors to foreigners, who probably owe them, upon an average, forty or fifty millions of money. Let this Bill be repealed, and they will receive about three-fourths of what is now due to them. All these, however, though they are evils, and though the catalogue of them might be greatly augmented, are nothing at all when compared to this; *that the repeal of this Bill would be an open declaration of national bankruptcy, and a sentence passed upon us of perpetual paper-money.*—Away would go not only the hopes but the possibility of a return to cash-payments. Every creature would perceive the rottenness of the system. No man would put by a bank note even for a month. The Bank would not dare to offer bullion at almost any price. A fondness for real money, and an eagerness to get at it, would instantly seize upon every mind; *two prices* would be the not distant consequence; and the moment they became only a little in vogue,

the whole fabric would crumble into dust. In the meanwhile, no foreign effort could this nation make; against no power, however puny, and however outrageously insolent or unjust, would it dare to raise its arm. It would be stricken with feebleness in every limb and in every muscle; and while it was despised abroad, it would contain within itself all the elements of strife, confusion and violent revolution.

This measure, therefore, tho' I really think it will be adopted, in one shape or another, is *certain destruction*. The other measure, *that of reducing the interest of the debt*, is one of greater difficulty in the adoption; but, it would in the end be efficient, and productive of the best possible consequences. Yet, when men talk of reducing the interest of the debt, few of them, it appears to me, consider sufficiently all the effects of such a measure, and all the minor provisions with which it must be accompanied. To speak of these in the manner in which it would become me to speak of them, if I professed to be promulgating a plan, would require more time and space than I have now to spare. It is sufficient for

the present to observe, that, to adopt this measure without a *Reform of the Parliament*, would be utterly impossible. The number of persons, whose interests would be deeply affected by such a measure; the agitation which the bringing forward of such a subject would occasion, would call forth so much feeling, would occasion such a stir, would excite so much passion, that confusion must instantly succeed, unless the measure were adopted with the sanction of men sent into the Parliament by the great masses of the people. The measure is absolutely necessary. This nation cannot be saved from revolution without it; but never can it be adopted unless the great and active masses of the people be previously conciliated and tranquillised. This is a measure where particular interests must give way to the general good and security. There will, in fact, be two great bodies contending one against the other. If the people join with the one, all will be safe, all will be right. If they join with the other, combustion and revolution are the consequences; and join with that other they will, unless they be first repre-



sented in Parliament to their satisfaction.

Any Ministry who will adopt this measure, accompanied with a Reform of the Parliament, will have the cordial support of the whole nation, an insignificant few only excepted. For my own part I should like to see it done by the present as well as any other Ministers; and, indeed, I should prefer it; and for this reason, that the change would be more marked as a change of *measures*, and would take away the confusion that would arise from a change of men. I allow that it is an undertaking of immense difficulty. I have never represented it as an easy matter. I spent nearly a whole year in Long Island, putting together my thoughts upon the subject — When I came to place them upon paper, I found the difficulties much greater and more numerous than I had anticipated. Yet I arrived at the conclusion that the measure, all precautions being duly taken, was perfectly practicable and destitute of every tinge of injustice or harshness. That I might not have to accuse myself of reproaching others with not doing that which I myself with all my lei-

sure was unable to discover the means of doing, I wrote down in the shape of a single Bill, the means of quietly effecting a *Reform*, of securing the people's concurrence in a reduction of the debt, and of restoring tranquility and prosperity to the country. I had no other object, in endeavouring to obtain a seat in Parliament, than that of *laying this Bill before the country*. I failed in that endeavour, and, therefore, I have been unable to do that which it was my intention to do; and for not doing which I certainly have no blame to take to myself. Had that measure been proposed, I verily believe that the people of this country would now have seen their way through the dismal gloom in which they are enveloped. I have done my duty. If my country owes nothing to me, I, at any rate, owe it nothing. The people have from me all that I am able to perform "*out of doors*." Within doors they have others to serve them; to give them the use of their industry, their zeal, their knowledge and their talents. *There* they have . . . . . not Moses and the Prophets, indeed, . . . . . but, they have *Peter Moore and Edward El-*



lice! They have *Pascoe Grenfell*, *John Maberly*, *Alexander Baring*, and *David Ricardo*! When zeal and courage, united with disinterestedness and fidelity, are required, they have, for the "well-foughten field," *Messrs. Brougham* and *Denman*, to "keep together in their chivalry:" and, in cases of extraordinary emergency and peril, they have the *Westminster Don* (with true and trusty *Sancho* at his heels); spell-bound at present, indeed, by the potent Magicians in big wigs and ermined robes, but, always, at other times, ready to receive the homage due to "England's Glory!" With these to watch over their interests, to devise means for their relief, to carry those means into execution and to provide for their prosperity and their honour, how can the people of England imagine that they have any want to lament? The wonder is, my lord, that fitted out with such guardians and such guides, the people should ever have experienced injury in any degree, or have wandered one single step from the path of political felicity.

It is curious enough to observe, that I, who have been obliged to bear a very large

portion of the charge of revolutionary designs, should have been constantly labouring to produce that which is absolutely necessary to prevent revolution. I have no particular interest to prevent the overthrow of the Nobles and the confiscation of their estates; and yet I have been constantly labouring to prevent that overthrow and that confiscation; and they have all the while been treating me as an enemy while they have hugged to their bosoms the audacious stock-jobbers, who have, at last, actually proposed to divide their lands; and, indeed, as I have clearly shewn, to take the whole of their lands away. Most other men in my place, situated as I am, treated as I have been, seeing approaching that which I see approaching, would say not a word about the matter, deal like others in unmeaning generalities; let the storm come on, and be ready for a share in the scramble, being, as I am, quite as well qualified for taking part in a scramble as the rest of my neighbours. But, I do not wish to see a scramble. I wish to see my country preserved, to be great, happy, and secure. I have, besides, the natural desire to see my opinions

prevail and my doctrines adopted. The remedies, I have long recommended. I have often said, that to *my shop* the Ministers, be they who they may, must come; or the thing must go on to revolution. The fulfilment of this saying, I must naturally wish for; I do wish for it; and if there be any sin in the wish, let it rest upon my head.

Provided that the proper measures be adopted, what is it to me who are the *men*? I have often been stricken with wonder, that the Ministers themselves should wait for others to propose to adopt the remedy; seeing that they themselves at all times possess the power of adoption. They are fallen now into very deep disgrace with the country at large; but all they want to retrieve themselves in an instant is, to retrace their steps with regard to her Majesty the Queen, and to use the language of conciliation towards the people. In general, it is a sound maxim, that power is to be preserved by the use and exertion of itself; but, conjunctures arise when this maxim becomes inapplicable; and the present is a conjuncture of that kind. This is a time of great

distress amongst the people; a time of great difficulty to the government. The load which power has to bear is greater than it can bear; and carry on, at the same time, a conflict with public opinion. Common prudence, therefore, calls upon the Ministers to give way. And what dishonour would there be in giving way? Can ten or twelve men be dishonoured in yielding to a whole nation? Can a king be dishonoured in yielding to the prayers of his people; and especially at a time, when that people, after more than twenty years of the most generous sacrifices, are plunged into a state of the deepest distress?

Who can behold, without feeling shame for his country, the contest, the strife, the conflict, the *war of addresses* that is now carrying on in this kingdom! On the one side we see, generally speaking, persons in authority, and, lamentable to relate, the Clergy in particular; and, on the other side, we see the great mass of the people! Here is a division enough to terrify rulers of the stoutest nerves; and yet not one step is taken to put an end to this unnatural, this ill-boding



strife, which proclaims to the world that the precept, "to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him;" that this precept, so necessary to the preservation of peace and harmony in the community, and heretofore so cheerfully obeyed in England, is, at last, and almost by sheer force, to be erased from the minds of the people. Yet, again I say, my lord, how is harmony to be restored by a mere *change of men* at the head of the government? The cause of her Majesty was well calculated to excite great feeling; but that feeling would have been of short duration had it not found constant food in the numerous other grounds of discontent. This is so manifest that no one can deny it. It is proclaimed by the friends of the Ministers, and it is acknowledged by ourselves. This clearly shows that a mere change of men is not what is wanted. And it admonishes every man who may aspire to the Ministry, that the possession of power is impossible, unaccompanied with a Reform of the Parliament; without which Reform, I, for perhaps, the hundredth time, give

it as my decided opinion, that England never can again enjoy one day of tranquillity.

I cannot conclude this letter without frankly stating to your Lordship, that viewing the two parties in Parliament in their relative industry and talent, and even in their relative integrity as public men, I can see nothing to make me wish for a change of mere men. If I see no great mass of talent on the side of the Ministers, I look in vain for it on your side, if I except your Lordship, and not more than two other persons. As to general views upon the great subject which has occupied the chief part of this letter, I find no difference in the two parties, if I except yourself and my Lord King. As to the eagerness for power and emolument, and disregard of the complaints of the people, can I wish to change, can I wish to displace any set of men, who are likely to be supplanted, in part, at least, by Mr. Brougham, Sir James Macintosh, Mr. Scarlett, and Mr. Abercrombie? If I see scramblers on the ministerial side; if that terrify me in them, what am I to hope for in a change such as that which alone presents itself to me? Oh, no! I



have no hope but in a change of the *system*, and if the system be to go on, in God's name, let it come to its natural termination without the tormenting scarifications of a batch of Edinburgh Reviewers!

I remain,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P.S. The *going-out* of Mr. Canning may have in view nothing more than a repetition of the trick that he played off in 1814! He was *not in*, when he played that trick.

#### "PLACARD CONSPIRACY."

I did not much like the *idea of prosecutions* upon this subject at the first; and certainly my liking has not been increased by the progress of the affair. I am ready to do justice to the motives of the gentlemen with whom the inquiry originated; but I not only do not approve of, but am decidedly hostile to, the prosecution of a man for *high treason*, for being the *author of a placard*! This is a most dangerous precedent; and if *printers* and *publishers* will swear *in the manner that I have heard*

*some of them swear*, it is very hard to say what man's life is safe; what man may not have his head cut off, and his carcase cut into quarters! You have only to be in the habit of having things printed by a man, or published by a man, who has motives sufficient to induce him to swear away your life. Let but this precedent be established, and who will dare, not to trust his manuscript in the hands of a printer, but who will dare even to enter a printing office?

But, if a bill be found against Franklin, or Fletcher, or whatever be his name; if a bill for high treason be found against him, is the *printer* to escape? I have always understood, that, in the crime of high treason, accessories were *principals*. And, pray, was not the printer an accessory? Aye, and the compositor and the pressman, too! Here is a pretty scene opening to our view! Here is a something which the Government and the Attorney-General never appear to have thought of. If it be proper to charge this offence of Franklin as high treason, mild, indeed, have been the proceedings of the Government! I have read what is

called the "*Treasonable Placard*." It was inflammatory, to be sure; but if it were *high treason*, there is not a week passes over our heads the publications of which would not bring some man to the block. The offender is, it appears, gone away; and, therefore, his *life* may not be in danger; but, the *precedent* will be the same; and if, unfortunately, a *conviction* should take place, writers against the Government may begin to look sharply about them; and, at any rate, this prosecution, by popular subscription, will have made a most terrible scourge to be shook over their backs.

There is another singularity in this strange series of proceedings. There is something about a *conspiracy* in the printing and publishing of these Placards. The charge of *libel* has generally been thought to be sufficiently *comprehensive*. We have long been complaining, and justly complaining, of the monstrous extension and capacity of its jaws; but the ingenuity of our *friends* has now discovered a mode of giving a stretch even to those jaws. *Composing, printing and publishing; and causing to be*

*printed and published*: these have hitherto been thought sufficient to do the business; but, good God! what is to protect us, if *conspiring* to do, or to cause any of these to be done, is to become a crime, and a crime, too, observe, which may be punished even by *banishment*!

When people are striking at their enemies, they should take care that the blow does not recoil upon themselves. Unquestionably all this has been *well meant*; but I am satisfied that it is one of the most dangerous steps that ever was taken. If the conviction take place upon the charge of high treason, a charge preferred by the *friends of Reform*, and the expences borne by public subscription, who in future shall dare to complain of any degree of severity that may be exercised by the Government against the press?

Of the Placards I said, and I say still, that, as far as I have read of them, I have no fault to find. They were calculated to do no good to the Ministry, certainly; but it is not for *me* to quarrel with them for that! They were inflammatory, and is it for *me* to dislike them on that

account? Some of them were calculated to throw imputations on the gentlemen of the *Queen's Plate Committee*; but could not those gentlemen have followed the example of her Majesty herself? Could they not have imitated her magnanimity? Could they not endure in silence a thousandth part as much as she suffered to pass without a word of complaint? They did not, I think, sufficiently reflect on the *possible consequences*. I hope they will reflect before it be too late.

However, I seriously object to the prosecution of Franklin for High Treason. It appears to me a most monstrous stretch of the law; and I do most earnestly hope that a judge and jury will be found to prevent the horrible precedent from being established. It is a point of importance, too, to ascertain what part the *printer* is to act here! This is a matter of very serious weight. Here is a great question of morality as well as of law; a question of good faith, a question of fidelity, a question of private confidence; and if all these are to be set at nought for the sake of arriving at a suspicion (for it seems to amount to no more) of Franklin having

been set on, or employed by persons in high public authority; if all these sacred obligations are to be set at nought for the obtaining of this object, I must confess that I shall think the object much too dearly purchased.

I have made these remarks for the purpose of putting all *gentlemen connected with the Press* upon their guard, and awakening in their minds, before it be too late, a due sense of the dangers to which we are all likely to be exposed by this strange, this wild, and I must say unnatural proceeding. Again, I give full credit to the motives of the gentlemen, with whom these proceedings originated; but again, I beseech them to consider whether they will persevere until they have established precedents calculated to render insecure the life of every man that shall venture to trust himself in the hands of a printer.

Whenever these trials come on it will be necessary for us to pay particular attention to the *witnesses* and the *nature of the evidence*. Franklin has, it seems, *absconded*. Greater care, therefore, is necessary in endeavouring to ascertain the truth of



the charges against him. Above all things I hope that no eagerness to give a blow to persons in authority will make the prosecutors overlook the mischief they may do to others. Let them bear in mind the homely old proverb: "*sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.*"

### TO TRUNK MAKERS.

#### A GREAT BARGAIN !!!

"Published this day, Remarks  
"on *Lord John Russell's Bill*  
"for the Disfranchisement of  
"the Borough of Grampound.  
"By a Member of the last Par-  
"liament, price 2s. ; and *Lord*  
"*John Russell's Letter to Mr.*  
"*Wilberforce*, and a Petition to  
"the King; *with a Preface*,  
"price 1s. 6d. Printed for J.  
"Ridgway, Piccadilly."

Extract from *M. Chronicle*, 19th Dec.  
1820.

### A PEEP AT THE PEERS.

A new and complete edition of the above work is now published, containing more than a *hundred corrections*, printed in a *new form*, the form and size of the *Political Register*, and is sold at the same price, by W. BENBOW, 269, Strand.

### COBBETT'S GRAMMAR.

*Just Published, Price 2s. 6d.*  
The *fourth edition*, carefully corrected, and dedicated to her Majesty, the Queen, of this work,

which, as its title expresses, is intended for the use of schools and of young persons in general, and more especially for the use of *Soldiers, Sailors, Apprentices* and *Plough-Boys*.

Sold by W. BENBOW, 269, Strand.

### PROPOSED DINNER.

I insert below the proposition about a dinner. In consequence of letters received from several gentlemen in the country, I have determined to put it off to some little time after New Year's Day, because I find it would be inconvenient for them to come up to London in the Christmas week. Probably, therefore, it will be in the second or third week in January, due notice will be given of the precise day. Some persons appear to have imagined that I propose a sort of Meeting of *Delegates*. I assure them I mean no such thing! I mean merely a Meeting of persons to dine together, for the purpose of discussing the propriety of sending forth a declaration of their views and wishes with regard to Reform. The subject has been a good deal *mistified*. I wish to see it shortly treated of in a declaration. And though I by no means pretend to dictate or prescribe to the country, or to any part of it, I am one man, at least, and have a right to offer my opinion. If numbers join me in those opinions, the joint and deliberate expression of the opinions may do good; and, at any rate, it appears to me impossible that it should do harm.

## TO THE REFORMERS.

## COUNTRYMEN AND FRIENDS,

The time seems to be arrived for *us* to make to the nation an explicit, a solemn, and a formal *Declaration* of our views and intentions. It is impossible for any man in his senses to believe, that the present state of things can last long. Indeed the very supporters of corruption avow, that a *great change* of some description must speedily take place. But, while all agree, that there must be a *change*, very few are found ready to declare what it is that they expect, or indeed, that they wish.

It is true, that *we*, the Reformers, have repeatedly expressed by petitions, and by other means, what are our *wishes*. But, this expression, though sufficiently plain, has been buried under a mass of co-temporary matter, and our views have been disfigured by the misrepresentations of the agents of our malignant and powerful enemies. Besides, the statements in support of our claims, the several writings in which our principles and designs have been sent forth, lie scattered here and there, and are nowhere embodied in one single piece of reasonable bulk. Many who are now *young men*, were *boys* four years ago when our struggle first began to assume a really serious aspect. Such of us as have long been engaged in the struggle, are apt to imagine, that, because we clearly understand the nature of the cause, the whole nation must

clearly understand it; which, though an error natural enough, is still an error.

For these reasons, and many others that might be stated, it appears to me, that we now ought to send forth a *Declaration* of the description above given; and, if any considerable number of you concur with me in opinion, the following is the means that I shall adopt for effecting that purpose.

Circumstances may arise to prevent what I now intend, but, at present, my intention is to invite all who may choose to join me, to *dine* at some convenient place in London, on, or some day before *New Year's Day*.

It is my opinion, that from this meeting, a *Declaration* might at *this time*, be sent forth with great advantage to the cause of *Parliamentary Reform*, which, indeed, is *the cause of the kingdom*. It is now clear to most men, and, I believe, to *all men*, that to change the Ministry without changing the nature of the Representation in the Commons' House, would produce *no possible good*. And, yet, is it not indescribable disgrace to this great country that this present Ministry should remain in power! Those, who, from their rank and talent, might be naturally looked towards as the successors of the Ministers, know, and, indeed, *acknowledge*, that they could not *remain* in power without the support of *the Reformers*; and yet, to have that support they affect to *fear* to adopt the means; they



affect to fear, that the adoption of those means would be *dangerous to the whole fabrick of the government.*

This, therefore, is the time for us to *appeal to the nation*; and to shew, as we easily can, that those *fears*, real or pretended, are not only wholly groundless, but that to reform the Parliament is the only means of preserving the fabrick.

Such is the object which I have in view; and such the mode in which I propose to effect it. I by no means wish to put *myself forward* on this or on any occasion; but, when we *want a thing done*, the example of the American Farmers has taught me that, "*come boys!*" and not "*go boys!*" is the word.

If any Gentleman, in country or town, has any improvement to suggest, as to the manner of accomplishing the object, I shall be happy to attend to such suggestions. If the meeting take place, I shall hope to see at it many Gentlemen from the *Country*. We must all be anxious, that what we do, upon this great occasion, may be able in the manner as well as sound in the matter; and, therefore, it is desirable to draw together a mass of knowledge and talent worthy of the goodness of our cause.

If it were thought desirable to *circulate the Declaration widely*, a *hundred thousand* might be distributed for a sum which we could certainly raise for such a purpose. Perhaps, however, the best way will be to publish it without any sub-

scription, and to sell it *very cheap indeed* to persons who may be disposed to hand it about amongst their neighbours, especially in the country.

I shall be glad to receive communications upon the subject, *by post* (No. 269, Strand); but the *postage must be paid*; or, I shall be, as I already should be, exposed to enormous plunder.

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE PEOPLE OF BOTLEY.

Though the *Parson* took away the keys of the Church to prevent you from ringing in honour of the *Queen's triumph*, you are, I understand, to have a *Christmas Gambol* on account of a *lady*. Whether you will be allowed to *ring the bells*, upon that occasion, I know not. It will, doubtless, be a subject of great rejoicing; and, if the *Papa* accept of my offer, I shall certainly be down to *stand god-father*. I have already got a *whistle* and a *rattle* for the *baby*, as I dare say it will be very fond of *clack* and *clatter*. I shall send those play-things to be deposited with the *Church-wardens*, who, considering all the circumstances, will, doubtless, think themselves honoured in the charge. I hope that there will be a grand *brewing of caudle* for all the gossips in the village, and I will subscribe ten shillings towards it. More particulars in my next.



## AMERICAN PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS.

Washington, Nov. 14, 1820.

[We cannot insert this document without observing, that it is the *very worst* piece of writing that, in the shape of a public-paper, ever met our sight.]

*Fellow Citizens of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives!*

In communicating to you a just view of public affairs, at the commencement of your present labours, I do it with great satisfaction; because, taking all circumstances into consideration which claim attention, I see *much cause to rejoice in the felicity of our situation*. In making this remark, I do not wish to be understood to imply, that an unvaried prosperity is to be seen in every interest of this great community. In the progress of a nation inhabiting a territory of such vast extent, and great variety of climate, every portion of which is engaged in foreign commerce, and liable to be affected, in some degree, by the changes which occur in the condition and regulations of foreign countries, it would be strange, if the produce of our soil, and the industry and enterprise of our fellow citizens, received, at all times, and in every quarter, an uniform and equal encouragement. This would be more than we have a right to expect, under circumstances the most favourable. *Pressures on certain interests, it is admitted, have been felt*; but allowing to these their greatest extent, they detract but little from the force of the remark already made. In

forming a just estimate of our present situation, it is proper to look at the whole; in the outline, as well as in the detail, a free, virtuous, and enlightened people know well the great principles and causes on which their happiness depends; and even those who suffer most, occasionally, in their transitory concerns, find great relief under their sufferings from the blessings which they otherwise enjoy, and in the consoling and animating hope which they administer. From whence do these pressures come? *Not from a Government* which is founded by, administered for, and supported *by the people*. We trace them to the *peculiar character of the epoch in which we live*, and to the extraordinary occurrences which have signalised it. *The convulsions with which several of the Powers of Europe have been shaken, and the long and destructive war in which all were engaged, with their sudden transition to a state of peace*, presenting, in the first instance, unusual encouragement to our commerce, and withdrawing it in the second, even within its wonted limit, could not fail to be sensibly felt here. The station, too, which we had to support through this long conflict, compelled, as we were finally, to become a party to it with a principal Power, and to make great exertions, suffer heavy losses, and to contract considerable debts, disturbing the ordinary course of affairs, by augmenting *to a vast amount*, the circulating medium, and thereby elevating, at one time,

*the price of every article above a just standard, and depressing it at another below it, had likewise its due effect.*

It is manifest, that the *pressures* of which we complain have proceeded, in a great measure, from these causes. When, then, we take into view the prosperous and happy condition of our country, in all the great circumstances which constitute the felicity of a nation—every individual in the full enjoyment of all his rights—the Union blessed with plenty, and rapidly rising to greatness, under a national government, which operates with complete effect in every part, without being felt in any, except by the ample protection which it affords, and under state governments which perform their equal share, according to a wise distribution of power between them, in promoting the public happiness—it is impossible to behold so gratifying, so glorious a spectacle, without being penetrated with the most profound and grateful acknowledgments to *the Supreme Author of all good* for such manifold and inestimable blessings. Deeply impressed with these sentiments, I cannot regard the pressures to which I have adverted otherwise than in the light of *mild and instructive admonitions*; warning us of dangers to be shunned in future; teaching us *lessons of economy*, corresponding with the simplicity and purity of our Institutions, and best adapted to their support; evincing the connection and dependence which the various

parts of our happy Union have on each other, thereby augmenting daily our social incorporation, and adding, by its strong ties, new strength and vigour to the political; opening a wider range, and with new encouragement to the industry and enterprise of our fellow-citizens at home and abroad; and more especially by the multiplied proofs which it has accumulated of the great perfection of our most excellent system of government, the powerful instrument, *in the hands of an all-merciful Creator*, in securing to us these blessings.

Happy as our situation is, it does not exempt us from solicitude and care for the future. On the contrary, as the blessings which we enjoy are great, proportionably great should be our vigilance, zeal, and activity to preserve them. Foreign wars may again expose us to new wrongs, which would impose on us new duties, for which we ought to be prepared. The state of Europe is unsettled, and how long peace may be preserved is altogether uncertain; in addition to which, we have interests of our own to adjust, which will require particular attention. A correct view of our relations with each Power will enable you to form a just idea of existing difficulties, and of the measures of precaution best adapted to them.

Respecting our relations with Spain, nothing explicit can now be communicated. On the adjournment of Congress in May last, the Minister Plenipotentiary



of the United States at Madrid was instructed to inform the Government of Spain, that if his Catholic Majesty should then ratify the Treaty, this Government would accept the ratification, so far as to submit to the decision of the Senate the question whether such ratification should be received in exchange for that of the United States heretofore given. By letters from the Minister of the United States to the Secretary of State, it appears that a communication, in conformity with his instructions, had been made to the Government of Spain, and that the Cortes had the subject under consideration. The result of the deliberations of that body, which is daily expected, will be made known to Congress as soon as it is received. The friendly sentiment which was expressed on the part of the United States, in the Message of the 9th of May last, is still entertained for Spain. Among the causes of regret, however, which are inseparable from the delay attending this transaction, it is proper to state, that satisfactory information has been received that measures have been recently adopted by designing persons to convert certain parts of the province of East Florida into depots for the reception of foreign goods, from whence to smuggle them into the United States. By opening a port within the limits of Florida, immediately on our boundary, where there was no settlement, the object could not be misunderstood. An early accommodation of differences will, it is hoped, prevent all such

fraudulent and pernicious practices, and place the relations of the two countries on a very amicable and permanent basis.

The commercial relations between the United States and the British colonies in the West Indies, and on this Continent, have undergone no change; the British Government still preferring to leave that commerce under the restriction heretofore imposed on it, on each side. It is satisfactory to recollect, that the restraints resorted to by the United States were defensive only, intended to prevent a monopoly under the British regulations, in favour of Great Britain; as it likewise is, to know that the experiment is advancing in a spirit of amity between the parties. The question depending between the United States and Great Britain, respecting the construction of the first Article of the Treaty of Ghent, has been referred, by both Governments, to the decision of the Emperor of Russia, who has accepted the umpirage. An attempt has been made with the Government of France, to regulate, by Treaty, the commerce between the two countries, on the principle of reciprocity and equality. By the last communication from the Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at Paris, to whom full power had been given, we learn that the negotiation had been commenced there, but serious difficulties having occurred, the French Government had resolved to transfer it to the United States, for which purpose the Minister Plenipotentiary of France had been ordered to re-



pair to this city, and whose arrival might soon be expected. It is hoped that this important interest may be arranged on just conditions, and in a manner equally satisfactory to both parties. It is submitted to Congress to decide, until such arrangement is made, how far it may be proper, on the principle of the Act of the last Session, which augmented the tonnage duty on French vessels, to adopt other measures for carrying more completely into effect the policy of that Act.

The Act referred to, which imposed new tonnage on French vessels, having been in force from and after the 1st day of July, it has happened that several vessels of that nation which had been dispatched from France before its existence was known, have entered the ports of the United States, and been subject to its operation, without the previous notice which the general spirit of our laws gives to individuals in similar cases. The object of that law having been merely to countervail the inequalities which existed to the disadvantage of the United States in their commercial intercourse with France, it is submitted also to the consideration of Congress, whether, in the spirit of amity and conciliation which it is no less the inclination than the policy of the United States to preserve in their intercourse with other powers, it may not be proper to extend relief to the individuals interested in those cases, by exempting from the operation of the law all those vessels which have entered our ports without

having had the means of previously knowing the existence of the additional duty.

The contest between Spain and the Colonies, according to the most authentic information, is maintained by the latter with improved success. The unfortunate divisions which were known to exist some time since at Buenos Ayres, it is understood, still prevail. In no part of South America has Spain made any impression on the Colonies, while, in many parts, particularly in Venezuela and New Granada, the Colonies have gained strength and acquired reputation, both for the management of the war, in which they have been successful, and for the order of the internal administration. The late change in the Government of Spain, by the re-establishment of the Constitution of 1812, is an event which promises to be favourable to the Revolution.—Under the authority of the Cortes, the Congress of Angostura was invited to open a negotiation for the settlement of differences between the parties, to which it was replied, that they would willingly open the negotiation, provided the acknowledgment of their independence was made its basis, but not otherwise. Of further proceedings between them we are uninformed.

No facts are known to this Government to warrant the belief that any of the powers of Europe will take part in the contest; whence it may be inferred, considering all circumstances which must have weight

in producing the result, that an adjustment will finally take place, on the basis proposed by the Colonies. To promote that result, by friendly counsels, with other powers, including Spain herself, has been the uniform policy of this Government. In looking to the interior concerns of our country, you will, I am persuaded, derive much satisfaction from a view of the several objects to which, in the discharge of your official duties, your attention will be drawn. Among these, none holds a more important place than the Public Revenue, from the direct operation of the power by which it is raised on the people, and by its influence in giving effect to every other power of the Government. The Revenue depends on the resources of the country, and the facility by which the amount required is raised, is a strong proof of the extent of the resources, and of the efficiency of the Government. A few prominent facts will place this great interest in a just light before you.

On the 30th of Sept. 1815, the funded and floating debt of the United States was estimated at 119,635,558 dollars. If to this sum be added the amount of 5 per cent. stock subscribed to the Bank of the United States, the amount of Mississippi Stock, and of the Stock which was issued subsequently to that date, the balances ascertained to be due to certain States, for military services, and to individuals for supplies furnished, and services rendered, during the late war, the public debt may be estimated as amounting,

at that date, and as afterwards liquidated, to one hundred and fifty-eight millions seven hundred and thirteen thousand forty-nine dollars. On the 30th of September, 1820, it amounted to ninety-one millions nine hundred and ninety-three thousand eight hundred and eighty-three dollars having been reduced in that interval, by payments, sixty-six millions eight hundred and seventy-nine thousand one hundred and sixty-five dollars. During this term, the expenses of the Government of the United States were likewise defrayed, in every branch of the civil, military, and naval establishments; the public edifices in this city, have been rebuilt, with considerable additions; extensive fortifications have been commenced, and are in a train of execution; permanent arsenals and magazines have been erected in various parts of the union; our navy has been considerably augmented, and the ordnance, munitions of war, and stores, of the army and navy, which were much exhausted during the war, have been replenished.

By the discharge of so large a proportion of the public debt, and the execution of such extensive and important operations in so short a time, a just estimate may be formed of the great extent of our national resources. The demonstration is the more complete and gratifying, when it is recollected that the direct tax and excise were repealed soon after the termination of the late war, and that the revenue applied to



these purposes has been derived almost wholly from other sources.

The receipts in the Treasury from every source, to the 30th of September last, have amounted to sixteen millions seven hundred and ninety-four thousand one hundred and seven dollars and sixty-six cents; whilst the public expenditure, to the same period, amounted to sixteen millions eight hundred and seventy-one thousand five hundred and thirty-four dollars and seventy-two cents, leaving in the Treasury on that day a sum estimated at one million nine hundred and fifty thousand dollars. For the probable receipts of the following year I refer you to the statement which will be transmitted from the Treasury.

The sum of three millions of dollars, authorized to be raised by loan, by an act of the last Session of Congress, has been obtained upon terms advantageous to the Government, indicating not only an increased confidence to the faith of the nation, but the existence of a large amount of capital, seeking that mode of investment, at a rate of interest not exceeding five per centum per annum.

It is proper to add, that there is now due to the Treasury, for the sale of public lands, twenty-two millions nine hundred and ninety-six thousand five hundred and forty-five dollars. In bringing this subject to view, I consider it my duty to submit to Congress, whether it may not be advisable to extend to

the purchasers of these lands, in consideration of the unfavourable change which has occurred since the sales, a reasonable indulgence. It is known that the purchases were made when the price of every article had risen to its greatest height, and that the instalments are becoming due at a period of great depression. It is presumed that some plan may be devised, by the wisdom of Congress, compatible with the public interest, which would afford great relief to these purchasers.

Considerable progress has been made, during the present season, in examining the coast and its various bays, and other inlets; in the collection of materials, and in the construction of fortifications for the defence of the Union, at several of the positions at which it has been decided to erect such works. At Mobile Point and Dauphin Island, and at the Rigolets, leading to Lake Ponchartrain, materials to a considerable amount have been collected, and all the necessary preparations made for the commencement of the works. At Old Point Comfort at the mouth of James' River, and at the Riprap, on the opposite shore, in the Chesapeake Bay, materials to a vast amount have been collected; and at the Old Point some progress has been made in the construction of the fortification, which is on a very extensive scale. The work at Fort Washington, on this river, will be completed early in the next spring; and that on the Pea-patch in the Delaware, in



the course of the next season. Fort Diamond at the Narrows, in the harbour of New York, will be finished this year. The works at Boston, New York, Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, and Niagara, have been in part repaired; and the coast of North Carolina, extending south to Cape Fear, has been examined, as have likewise other parts of the coast eastward of Boston. Great exertions have been made to push forward these works with the utmost dispatch possible; but when their extent is considered, with the important purposes for which they are intended, the defence of the whole coast—and, in consequence, of the whole interior—and that they are to last for ages, it will be manifest that a well-digested plan, founded on military principles, connecting the whole together, combining security with economy, could not be prepared without repeated examinations of the most exposed and difficult parts, and that it would also take considerable time to collect the materials at the several points where they would be required. From all the light that has been shed on this subject, I am satisfied that every favourable anticipation which has been formed of this great undertaking, will be verified; and that, when completed, it will afford very great, if not complete, protection to our Atlantic frontier, in the event of another war:—a protection sufficient to counterbalance, in a single campaign, with an enemy powerful at sea, the expense of all these works, without taking

into the estimate the saving of the lives of so many of our citizens, the protection of our towns and other property, or the tendency of such works to prevent war.

Our military positions have been maintained at Belle Point, on the Arkansas, at Council Bluff, on the Missouri, at St. Peter's, on the Mississippi, and at Green Bay, on the Upper Lakes. Commodious barracks have already been erected at most of these posts, with such works as were necessary for their defence. Progress has also been made in opening communications between them, and in raising supplies at each for the support of the troops, by their own labour, particularly those most remote.

With the Indians peace has been preserved; and a progress made in carrying into effect the act of Congress, making an appropriation for their civilization, with the prospect of favourable results. As connected equally with both these objects, our trade with those tribes is thought to merit the attention of Congress. In their original state, game is their sustenance, and war their occupation; and, if they find no employment from civilized powers, they destroy each other. Left to themselves, their extirpation is inevitable. By a judicious regulation of our trade with them, we supply their wants, administer to their comforts, and gradually, as the game retires, draw them to us. By maintaining posts far in the interior, we acquire a more thorough and direct control over

them; without which it is confidently believed that a complete change in their manners can never be accomplished. By such posts, aided by a proper regulation of our trade with them, and a judicious civil administration over them, to be provided for by law, we shall, it is presumed, be enabled not only to protect our own settlements from their savage incursions, and preserve peace among the several tribes, but accomplish also the great purpose of their civilization.

Considerable progress has also been made in the construction of our ships of war, some of which have been launched in the course of the present year.

Our peace with the powers on the coast of Barbary has been preserved, but we owe it

altogether to the presence of our squadron in the Mediterranean. It has been found equally necessary to employ some of our vessels, for the protection of our commerce, in the Indian Sea, the Pacific, and along the Atlantic coast. The interests which we have depending in those quarters, which have been much improved of late, are of great extent, and of high importance to the nation, as well as to the parties concerned, and would undoubtedly suffer, if such protection was not extended to them. In execution of the law of the last Session, for the suppression of the Slave Trade, some of our public ships have also been employed on the coast of Africa, where several captures have already been made of vessels engaged in that disgraceful traffic.

JAMES MONROE.